

## Role Conflict and Staff Productivity in Academic Libraries: A Study of Private Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between role conflict and staff productivity in academic libraries with a focused on private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. Two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study design was a descriptive research of a correlational type. The population for this study comprised of 87 library staff consisting of 26 librarians and 61 library officers and Assistants in the four studied private universities. Total census technique was applied for the study, that is, all the 87-library staff served as research subjects in this study. A researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Role Conflict and Staff Productivity Assessment Questionnaire" (RCSPAQ) was used for data collection. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics and Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the formulated hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that: work-family roles, co-curricular roles and social roles have a joint effect on staff productivity ( $F = 2152.027$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.0001$ ). The study also found that work-family roles ( $\beta = 0.362$ ;  $t = 7.424$ ;  $P < .01$ ), co-curricular roles ( $\beta = 0.328$ ;  $t = 9.162$ ;  $P < .01$ ) and social roles ( $\beta = 0.291$ ;  $t = 5.761$ ;  $P < .01$ ) respectively were independent predictors of library staff productivity. Based on the findings, the study recommended amongst that, library managers should avoid placing demands that are impossible to reach on staff as some may not be able to manage more than one role so as to avoid adding extra roles to those who cannot manage them.

**Keywords:** Academic Libraries, Co-Curricular Roles, Role Conflict, Social Roles, Staff Productivity, Work-Family Roles.

### Introduction

Academic libraries are service-based organizations, which are established, maintained and administered by tertiary institutions (especially universities) for the purpose of rendering services in order to accomplish its educational objectives for academic excellence. These services amongst others include: library orientation, library instruction, information service, selective dissemination of information (SDI), lending services, readers' advisory service, inter-library loan, reservation of documents, photocopying services, compilation of bibliographies and indexes, and supplementary services (Umunna, 2007). For the effective delivery of these aforementioned

services, library staff/employees are indispensable. This is because they are the deliverer of these services in order to meet the informational, research, educational and recreational needs of library users (lecturers, students, researchers etc.). According to Saliu, Wankasi, Eromosele and Olukade (2018), library staff are the heads/managers (librarians) and junior staff (library officers and assistants) saddled with the responsibility of providing information services that supports teaching, learning and research. Also, they can however be viewed as individuals who work professionally in a library, providing access to information and sometimes social services to users. Additionally, library staff may take administrative positions, provide long-term

planning of the library and provide instruction on information literacy to users/clientele.

Abdulraheem and Atunde (2018) reiterated further that library staff within tertiary institutions are expected to perform some roles (this specify the demands and expectations placed on every personnel in academic libraries in private universities); such as attending seminars, workshops and conferences, researching topics of interest, publishing of articles/textbooks, suggesting appropriate books for students different reading levels, review of books and journal databases, managing access to electronic information resources, developing programs for library users (McDermott & Quint, 2016), and partaking in extra-curricular activities. These set of roles expectations shapes the behaviour of these library staff. Unfortunately, library staff sometimes do not perform to the expected standards and neither do they seem to address the needs of library users/clientele (students, lecturers, researchers) and other stakeholders (Upev, Chorun & Idachaba, 2015; Oyewole & Popoola, 2013). Their productivity level had upsurge concerns over issues of reduced work concentration, loitering and gossiping around the workplace during work hours, absenteeism, intention to quit and job dissatisfaction. All the above are still the daily complaints of stakeholder in library administration. This productivity problem according to research evidences (Adiguzel, 2019; Oladejo & Awolusi, 2018; Adekanye, & Nduka, 2017; Ismaila, 2011) might be related to the domestic roles which they try to juggle with their work, having multiple roles, too much attendance of social functionaries, active participation in extracurricular activities, amongst other role-related factors.

This observation however aligns with the recent development in most academic libraries in private universities. It is common to find staff assigned with a number of roles to perform outside their primary roles. In the discharge of these roles, conflict may arise due to different roles assigned to them which place them into role conflicts, which have the capacity to affect their work productivity. Role conflict according to Palomino and Frezatti (2016) occurs in a situation where the role occupant (library staff) experiences inconsistencies in the role demands such that the roles demanded of him are ambiguous, contradictory, and inconsistent with

each other or with itself. This transcends that role conflict emanates from the simultaneous occurrences of two or more role requirements, so that performance of one of them makes performance of the other more difficult (Katz & Kahn cited in Palomino & Frezatti, 2016). Concurring with this view, Adiguzel (2019) opined that role conflict are the conflict of roles that an individual who has to play more than one role expectation at the same time has to fulfill one of the role expectations more than the other and in addition to the roles that one has to do. Based on this description, role conflict as noted by Sulyman (2016) and Ismaila (2011) can be streamlined under three main indices, namely work-family, co-curricular and social roles. Work-family role is a form of inter role conflict in which role pressures from work and family domains become an obstacle to library personnel job performance. Co-curricular roles refer to those duties that library personnel discharged in the school which complements the activities in the written curriculum (Sulyman, 2016). Social roles are described as a set of behaviours library personnel exhibits as a result of being a member of a social group or social environment.

In the simultaneous performance of these aforementioned roles, Adekanye and Nduka (2017) noted that an employee may make mistakes and become in-attentive to satisfy rules or behave unpleasantly towards others. Sometimes, they just daydream and do less work, hence less effective. Thus, if an employee is experiencing high levels of role conflict, their roles and responsibilities in family life/society may interfere with that of their workplace. This is because an employee will be more committed to the welfare of his/her family and that of social gathering, which thereby take priority over his/her primary roles as a library staff, thereby reducing or minimizing the resources of time and energy that he/she should be spending in the workplace. In support of this claim, Adiguzel (2019) argued that every potential role task possesses a potential conflict which makes an individual to become so pre-occupied with roles beyond their prescribed work role that they fail to concentrate on the job. This position aligns with the role theory, a perspective in organizational paradigm through the theoretical works of Kahn, Wolfe and Quinn between the periods 1950 and 1960, which was occasioned by the existence of organizational tensions in

workers when performing their assigned tasks. This theory as noted by Palomino and Frezatti (2016) is based on the premises that most of everyday work activity are carried out of socially defined categories (for example, mother/father, administrator, and librarian). Implying that, every social role is a set of duties, expectations, rights, behaviours and norms that individuals have to face and fulfill. However, when the expectations and requests of an employee are inconsistent, he/she may feel stressful, become dissatisfied, and perform less efficiently. Therefore, role conflict can be seen as the result of conflicting expectations imposed on individuals (Rizzo et al. cited in Wen, Zhou, Hu & Zhang, 2020). The suitability of this theory for this present study rest on the fact that, in formal organizations like academic libraries, role conflict can occur when, for example, a staff is expected to simultaneously act or carry out multiple roles that bear contradictory expectations.

In the light of these background, an understanding of the relationship between role conflict and staff productivity becomes imminent as researchers conducted variety of studies in different geographical locations and work spheres across the globe. Sayğan and Çiraklar (2020) conducted a survey among 137 bank employees on the effect of role conflict on workplace victimization in Turkey. Results from a hierarchical regression analysis revealed that negative affect has an independent variable and partial moderating variable role on the effect of role conflict and role ambiguity on workplace victimization. A correlational study (Bongga & Susanty, 2018) conducted among 154 employees of Transportation Companies in Indonesia reported that role conflict and role ambiguity have significant negative impact, both simultaneously and partially on employee job satisfaction. Gracious and Fouziya (2018) studied the impact of role stressors on intention to leave the job among 303 women information technology professionals in Kerala. Results from the regression analysis showed that there is a significant positive relationship between role conflict and intention to leave the job among women professionals in the IT industry. In another similar study conducted among 114 controllers in Brazil, Palomino and Frezatti (2016) found that respondents perceive role conflict and role ambiguity while they perform

their duties; and that job satisfaction of the controllers is affected more strongly by role conflict.

Bambang and Sugiyanto (2016) adopted the Structural Equation Modelling in examining the impact of role conflict on commitment and job performance of 248 internal auditors from 12 Regional Inspectorates in the provinces of Yogyakarta, South Sumatra, and East Java. Results showed that role conflict has negative impact on commitment and job performance. A study by Djony, Umar, Achmad and Mintarti (2015), which was conducted among 145 selected nurses at public health service centers at Kabupaten Kediri, East Java in Indonesia found that, role conflict does not influence organizational commitment, self-efficacy and nurse's performance. Another survey (Saranani, 2015) carried out in Southeast Sulawesi among 150 randomly selected employee at the department of public works also showed that role conflict has no significant positive effect on employee performance at the Department of Public Works Southeast Sulawesi province ( $r = 0.089$ ). Mutanga, Kaja, and Moyo (2015) equally established the existence of role conflict among 60 accountants in the Zimbabwean listed companies. The findings indicated the existence of role conflict among accountants. The main source of role conflict was having multiple roles. The greatest effect of role conflict was job stress and intention to quit.

In a survey carried out among 155 employees of AKLAD Interlink concept, Ibadan Nigeria, Oladejo and Awolusi (2018) discovered a significant effect of work-family role conflicts on both employee commitment and organizational performance. The study also showed that work-family role conflict had significant influence on personal characteristics of gender and marital status of employees. A similar study (Adekanye & Nduka (2017), which was conducted among 93 female librarians in nine selected federal academic libraries (University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, Federal University of Agriculture, Federal University of Technology, Yaba College of Technology, Federal University, Oye, Ekiti, Federal Polytechnic, Ile-Oluji and Federal Polytechnic, Ede) in South-West, Nigeria showed that work-family conflicts have low effect on job satisfaction and job performance of female

librarians. In addition, the study also showed that there is no significant relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction ( $r=0.28, P>0.05$ ).

Results from a descriptive institutional based study (Sulyman, 2016) carried out among 225 College of Education lecturers in Nigeria showed that job stress (mean value 3.97), reduction of lecturer's participation in conferences and academic workshops (mean value 3.85), lecturer's inability to meet up with deadlines (mean value 3.77) and lecturers' unpunctuality in school (mean value 3.50) respectively are the effect of role conflict on academic staff effectiveness. Correlational outcome from a cross-sectional study (Udeka & Raimi, 2016) initiated among 920 female bankers in selected banks within the Federal Capital Territory metropolis revealed a strong relationship between work-family role conflict and low job performance among female bankers. The study further discovered that, the relationship between work-family role conflict and low job performance is higher among women with more children and less spousal/family support or other forms of social support system.

A survey (Ikonne, 2015) of 125 library employees of University libraries in South-West Nigeria showed that a positive relationship between role conflict and psychological wellbeing ( $p < 0.05$ ) of the respondents. In another correctional study, Oyewole and Popoola (2013) determined the psycho-social factors effect on job performance of 195 library personnel in federal colleges of education in Nigeria. Results from the multiple regression analyses indicated that the joint effect of independent variables (self-concept, work-family conflict, job satisfaction and job stress) on job performance of library personnel was significant ( $F(4,168) = 2.920; R = .255, R^2 = .065, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.403; P < .05$ ). A study (Ogbogu, 2013) conducted among 250 academic women in Nigerian public Universities in Southern Nigeria discovered that women's academics experiences of work-family conflict impacted negatively on their level of job performance and well-being.

From the empirical studies examined, there appears to be paucity of literature on role conflict and productivity of library staff in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State as those reviewed studies were conducted among academic staff, civil (public) servants, technology-based workers, and private sectors workers. It was also observed that, no previous studies of this magnitude have been conducted within the conceptual and geographical scope of this research, rather, most studies conducted in libraries concentrated mainly on work-family roles in relation to staff productivity. Thus, it is hoped that the findings of this study would contribute towards filling the gap in the dearth of literature in this area thereby contributing to knowledge in the field of library administration and management. Further, it is hoped that the library administrators would find the results of this study useful in order to keep abreast of modern management strategies and ways of enhancing staff productivity. In view of this, the study examined the relationship between role conflict and staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

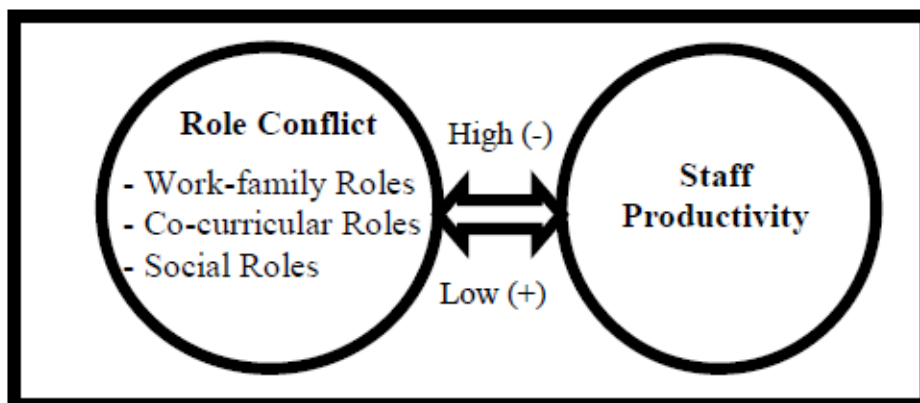
1. Determined the independent relationship between work-family, co-curricular and social roles and staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State.
2. Examined the joint effect of work-family, co-curricular and social roles on staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State.

In line with the aforementioned objectives, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H<sub>01</sub>: Work-family, co-curricular and social roles do not have independent relationship with staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

H<sub>02</sub>: Work-family, co-curricular and social roles have no joint effect on staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

In this study, the framework in Figure 1 identified the variables under study and shows the relationship effect.



**Figure 1.** Model of role conflict and staff productivity

The conceptual model in Figure 1 conceptualized that high level of staff productivity is expected when role conflict is low, while a decline or low level of productivity is expected, when staff experience high internal and external role conflict pressures. It could, therefore, be assumed that role conflict greatly interacts positively or negatively to influence the productivity of staff or organizational goal achievements.

### Materials and methods

The present study was carried out in private universities in Kwara State which are

geographically sited in Ilorin, Eiyenkorin, Omu-Aran, and Offa respectively.

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive research of a correlational type. This design was chosen because it allows the researchers to collect quantitative data in order to test the formulated hypotheses regarding the subject of the study. The population for this study comprised of 87 library staff consisting of 26 librarians and 61 library officers and Assistants in four private universities in Kwara State (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** The Sample Population of Private Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

S/N	Universities	Year of Establishment	Librarians	Library Officers & Assistants	Total
1	Al-Hikamah University, Ilorin	2005	08	17	25
2	Crown-Hill University	2016	03	12	15
3	Landmark University, Omu-Aran	2011	10	18	28
4	Submit University, Offa	2015	05	14	19
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>87</b>

Source: Offices of the Registrars of each University

No sampling technique was applied for the study, since the population of the study is meagre. Thus, all the 87-library staff (26 librarians and 61 library officers and assistants) in the four studied private universities in Kwara State were sampled. The adoption of the total population as a sample, rather than a scant portion as observed by Gwang (2015) and Osuala (2005) is permitted in a capacity where the population, like the present research, is too small to limit the collection of data to a proportion of it.

Data for this study was gathered through the use of a self-designed questionnaire tagged "Role Conflict and Staff Productivity Assessment Questionnaire" (RCSPAQ). The questionnaire was in three (3) sections. Section A was on demographic data of the respondents. Section B is a close ended question containing 15 items on work-family role, social role and co-curricular roles of library staff. Section C, which was administered to library managers (University librarians/Deputy University librarians/Heads of sections/units) also consists

of 15 items which was used to determine the productivity level of library staff. Sections B and C was a close ended form of questionnaire based on a four (4) point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, agree (A) = 3 points, disagree (D) = 2 point and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 points. However, the designed questionnaires were generated from available literatures in relation to this research endeavour.

The instrument was validated by experts in Library and Information Sciences, Educational Administration and Planning and Sociology for contents, construct and face validity. Reliability was determined by pilot testing the research instrument on 20 participants (library personnel) outside the population of the main study, specifically University of Ilorin. The data collected was subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach Alpha method. The alpha values of .823, .791, .784 and .752 respectively were obtained for work-family roles, co-curricular roles, social roles and staff productivity, and an overall reliability index of 0.788 was obtained. This indicates that the instrument is reliable enough for the study.

The researchers with the permission of the University and Library management administered the research instrument to the participants in the studied academic libraries. The instruments were retrieved on the spot so as to minimize questionnaire loss. This gave a 97.0% response rate as 84 out of 87 administered questionnaires were returned and filled correctly.

Inferential statistics was utilized to analyze the data collected. Specifically, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics was used to test the research hypothesis one, while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the second hypothesis. All the null hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance.

## Results

The outcome from the tested hypotheses and their discussion were presented as follow:

### Hypotheses testing

H<sub>01</sub>: Work-family, co-curricular and social roles do not have independent significant relationship with staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

**Table 2.** Correlation co-efficient between role conflict indices (work-family, co-curricular and social roles) and staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

Correlations					
		Staff Productivity	Work-family roles	Co-curricular roles	Social roles
Staff Productivity	Pearson Correlation	1	.511**	.424**	.403**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	84	84	84	84
Work-family roles	Pearson Correlation	.511**	1	.383**	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	84	84	84	84
Co-curricular roles	Pearson Correlation	.424**	.383**	1	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	84	84	84	84
Social roles	Pearson Correlation	.403**	.394**	.371**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	84	84	84	84

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Statistical result from Table 2 indicates that work-family, co-curricular and social roles were significantly related with staff productivity in

academic libraries ( $r = 0.511, 0.425$  and  $0.403$ ) respectively. This implies that work-family roles contributed 51% to staff productivity, co-

curricular roles also contribute 42% to productivity of library staff, while social roles contributed 40% library staff productivity.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Work-family roles, co-curricular and social roles have no joint effect on staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

**Table 3.** Regression Outcome on joint effect of work-family, co-curricular and social roles on staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

<b>Model Summary</b>					
Model 1	R = 0.575	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.564	Adj.R <sup>2</sup> = 0.561		
	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	344.652	3	112.273	2152.027	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	18.524	80	0.182		
Total	363.176	83			
Variable	Unstandardized coefficient (β)	Std. error	Standardized coefficient (β)	T	Sig.
Constant	0.034	0.068		0.232	0.000
Work-family roles	0.461	0.064	0.362	7.424	0.001
Social roles	0.447	0.054	0.328	9.162	0.003
Co-curricular roles	0.376	0.063	0.291	5.761	0.005

Table 3 reveals that role conflict indicators of work-family, co-curricular and social roles were significantly joint predictors of staff productivity (F =2152.027, p-value < 0.0001). The predictor variables jointly contributed 56.1% to productivity of library staff, while the remaining 43.9% could be attributed to other factors not researched in the present study. This is an indication that the three role conflict variables jointly have significant impact on the staff productivity in academic libraries. In furtherance, work-family roles (β = 0.362; t = 7.424; P<.01), co-curricular roles (β = 0.328; t = 9.162; P<.01) and social roles (β = 0.291; t = 5.761; P<.01) were independent predictors of staff productivity at 1% level respectively.

## Discussion

The findings indicate that positive relationship exists between work-family roles and staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State (r = 0.511; p<0.05). This finding is orchestrated by the fact that many library staff especially married women would prefer to finish their domestic roles before preparing for their work activities and this led to sparing little time which may not be sufficient for adequate preparation (Gracious & Fouziya 2018; Udeka & Raimi, 2016). This is interfering with their work role which may lead to lateness, tiredness, absenteeism, dissatisfaction and low productivity in their job.

Thus, it can be safely affirmed that heavier family load could lead to stronger role conflict if it is not moderated. This result attested to the outcomes of previous studies (Oladejo & Awolusi, 2018; Udeka & Raimi, 2016; Oyewole & Popoola, 2013) that work-family roles decreases job satisfaction, commitment of individuals and their overall work performance. This study therefore negates the findings of Adekanye and Nduka (2017) who found no link among work-family conflicts, job satisfaction and job performance of female librarians.

The study also found a significant relationship between co-curricular roles and staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State (r = 0.425; p<0.05). When co-curricular roles such as organizing and going for meetings often, engaging in advisory counseling for students daily, as well as sporting events in schools' conflict with the time allotted for discharging statutory duties, these tend to lowers productivity on the part of the library personnel.

The study discovered a significant relationship between social roles and staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State (r = 0.403; p<0.05). This implies that excessive participation in social roles tend to have an effect on productivity of library staff. This is because more time will be devoted to social functions at the expense of actual job roles. Thus, for library

personnel to attain high level of productivity, social functionaries should be minimized to the barest minimum and more concentration on it prescribed statutory or job duties which they are been employed for.

The study further discovered that role conflict indicators (work-family roles, co-curricular roles and social roles) have a joint effect on productivity of personnel in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria ( $p$ -value < 0.0001). In other words, it could be inferred that the higher the role conflict experienced by library personnel, the lower their productivity and the lower the library personnel's role conflict, the tendency for improved job accomplishment in their statutory duties and responsibility. Thus, low level of staff productivity in academic libraries may enlighten the management on the reconsideration of the staff(ers) role assignment and expectations in the bid to enhance their productivity. This finding agreed with those of Sayğan and Çiraklar (2020), Bongga and Susanty (2018), Gracious and Fouziya (2018), Bambang and Sugiyanto (2016), Palomino and Frezatti (2016), Ikonne (2015), and Ogbogu (2013) which reported that employees who were under low role conflict performed better than those under high role conflict. However, this finding negates that of Saranani (2015) and Djony, Umar, Achmad and Mintarti (2015) whose independent studies found that role conflict has no significant effect on employee performance.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was established that role conflict indicators of work-family, co-curricular and social roles are important predictors of staff productivity in academic libraries in private universities in Kwara State. Therefore, in order to enhance the productivity level of library staff, higher level of role conflict should be minimized. The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Library managers should ensure regular development strategies that would help their staff to be trained and retrained in line with modern approaches of role conflict management. This could be done by exposing them to seminars, conferences and workshops both nationally and internationally.

2. Library managers should avoid placing demands that are impossible to reach on staff as some may not be able to manage more than one role so as to avoid adding extra roles to those who cannot manage them.
3. Role of staff in the academic library should be adequately distributed by the library managers to prevent role conflict and duty lopsidedness for improved productivity so as to attained university goals and objectives.
4. Library managers need to pay attention to the interface of work and family by initiating family friendly policies that take into consideration the multifaceted roles of women.
5. Library managers and University management should introduce and provide organizational support programme for library staff in order to reduce the burden of work-family role conflict interface and virtually induced commitment to their jobs. Also, gender and marital issues need to be considered during staff recruitment, assigning responsibilities as well as placement process in order to enhance work productivity.
6. There should be strict adherence to balanced social lives by library staff for enhanced productivity.

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